

Obituary

Professor Axel Perdrup

26 February 1911—3 November 1990

The death has occurred in his eightieth year of Professor Axel Perdrup, the President of the International Union Against the Venereal Diseases and the Treponematoses from 1974 to 1978.

Axel Perdrup was born in Copenhagen, graduating MD from its university in 1936. He became in succession a specialist in public health in 1942, a specialist in internal medicine in 1947 and a specialist in dermato-venereology in 1949. After a period of research in the State Serum Institute in Copenhagen, he became the chief physician at the Departments of Dermato-venereology of the Copenhagen Municipal Hospital in 1949, the Rudolph Bergs Hospital in 1961 and the Hvidovre (New Municipal) Hospital in 1974. He was made professor in dermato-venereology at Copenhagen University in 1971. During the years 1956–1980, he was advisor on venereal diseases to the Danish government and Greenland.

He was well known internationally, lecturing in the USA from 1948, his last tour sponsored by US Public Health Service being in 1988, when he also lectured on HIV infection and AIDS. He was the IUVDT Regional Director for Europe from 1959 and a consultant to WHO from 1961 to 1970. He made trips on behalf of that organisation to USSR, Thailand and Poland. He chaired numerous professional committees on venereal diseases not only in Denmark but also for WHO, as late as 1980. He was for many years a member of the MSSVD and an honorary fellow of corresponding societies in Finland, Sweden, Austria and Poland.

We forget now how relatively few specialists throughout the world kept the flag of venereology flying after the introduction of penicillin. Axel was amongst the stalwarts. He pioneered the use of penicillin alone in the treatment of syphilis in Denmark in 1950, at a time when treatment was still based on arsenicals together with bismuth.

With Thorstein Guthe he supported WHO campaigns against endemic syphilis and yaws. His researches, recognised in *Penicillin in the Treatment of Syphilis*, WHO, 1972, covered the use of penicillin in neurosyphilis with systemic follow-up over several years. He noted that following treatment, the spinal fluid reagin tests may remain reactive for several years at a low titre without indication of active syphilis. He also noted that the clinical results and the findings of the cardiovascular system will depend on the damage already present when treatment begins.

He was a frequent visitor to Britain. He presided over General Assemblies of IUVDT in Malta in 1975 and Leeds in 1978 and last came officially to England in May 1990 where he attended the 35th General Assembly of IUVDT in London together with his wife Else, beloved to many of us, and his son Sven.

We give Else and Sven our deepest condolences.

Thorstein Guthe

(Formerly Chief Medical Officer, Venereal Diseases and Treponematoses, WHO Geneva, Executive Member, IUVDT)

Michael Waugh

(Secretary-General, IUVDT President MSSVD)